

The Communicator

Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists

New Board Members!

Governor Rick Perry has appointed three new members to the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists. Our new members are Sandra DeSobe of Houston, Antonio Morales of El Paso and Reverend B.W. McClendon of Austin.

Ms. DeSobe will be serving the board as a professional member. She is replacing George Pulliam, whose term expired. Ms. DeSobe is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in private practice.

Mr. Morales will be serving the board as a public member. He is filling the unexpired term of Carl Strain. Mr. Morales is a teacher in the El Paso school district.

Reverend McClendon will be serving the board as a public member. He is replacing Blas Castaneda, who resigned earlier this year. Reverend McClendon is the Pastor of the St. James Baptist Church in Austin.

We welcome the new members and look forward to working with them in the future. Each member brings a wealth of experience and expertise that will benefit all of Texas.

The Communicator is published biannually by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists.

Comments concerning the content of this newsletter or suggestions for articles to be included in future issues should be forwarded to the board office and marked to the attention of Georgia Norman, Editor.

Ethics Comm

By Sandra DeSobe

Since the establishment in 1991 of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists, the Board has reviewed numerous ethics complaints. As a regulatory board, it is our responsibility to protect the public and to insure that the profession that we examine upholds ethical and legal practices. Reviewing public complaints is a very serious aspect of the Board's responsibility.

In the first sixth months of 2002, the Ethics Committee of the Board has reviewed 25 cases. It is vital to implement a thorough investigation to insure validity to complaints before exercising any sanctions against a licensee. The cost of these investigations grows every year. In the first three quarters of the fiscal year, we have already overspent the budget allocation for the entire year.

The Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 502, §502.401, provides for the assessment of "administrative penalties" for those licensees found in violation of the profession's rules. The LMFT Board has never exercised this option of sanctions although it is delineated in the rules (see §801.299).

Beginning in fiscal year 2003 (September 1, 2002 – August 21, 2003), the Board will assess administrative penalties in appropriate cases. It is the opinion of the Board that the assessment of administrative penalties will penalize those persons violating LMFT Board rules and NOT penalize those who are practicing within the rules.

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Alternative Methods of Therapy Committee

By Brenda VanAmburgh

Alternative Methods of Therapy is now a standing committee of the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists. Regarding "tele-health" or "tele-practice", the question is what is our responsibility as a board to protect the public. We are discussing, gathering information, and watching developments (among the professional boards in Texas and other states as well). We are moving in the direction of uniformity of approach among the other professional boards in Texas to the Internet issue. To this end the LMFT Board amended Rule §801.44(L), effective April 11, 2001, as follows: "A licensee who engages in interactive therapy via the telephone or internet must provide the client with his/her license number and information on how to contact the board by telephone or mail, and must adhere to all other provisions of this chapter". At this time, Texas is only one of 5 state marriage and family therapy boards in the country with anything stated in their rules regarding Internet therapy. However, all regulatory boards across the United States are discussing this topic.

At this time our board does not choose to regulate the various nuances of tele-therapy. We want to be as LEAST restrictive as possible. However, we are continuing and will continue to study this issue in the future. For example, we are currently looking at the pros and cons of increasing the number of telephone/telephonic client hours that the board will allow as part of the 3000 client hours required for licensure in Texas (presently we only allow 300 telephonic client hours).

These are interesting times! We welcome your thoughts and we will keep you informed about our discussions and decisions.

Continuing Education

By Joe Ann Clack

A licensed Marriage and Family Therapist is required to complete 15 clock hours of continuing education annually that is acceptable to the board. A three-hour ethics course is required. These courses are required to keep marriage and family therapists abreast of any changes that are occurring. These hours must be completed during the current renewal cycle.

There are approximately 300 sponsors that have been approved by the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists. Each year, approximately 10% of the sponsors are randomly audited to ensure that the curriculum offered is providing training that will enhance knowledge in the profession. One of the major focuses of this board is to make sure that courses offered are providing quality education to the licensee.

It is prudent that each marriage and family therapist be adamant that courses ensure the licensee is given an opportunity for learning new methods or techniques that may be used in the profession. If you have concerns about any course that is not providing quality education, please send the materials to the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists, 1100 West 49th Street, Austin, Texas 78756 or call Bobby Schmidt, to discuss the course objectives and expected outcomes.

Licensure Board vs. Professional Association

***By Bobby D. Schmidt, MEd
Executive Director***

Many days I am given the opportunity (or challenge) to explain to licensees and/or members of the general public the difference between the licensure board and the professional association that deals within the realm of marriage and family therapy. While it seems as if the two entities could perform the same function, there are unique qualities to each.

The Texas Legislature through a statute or law establishes a licensure board. In this case it is known as the Marriage and Family Therapist Act. This law is found in the Occupations Code, Section 502. The Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists (board) is a nine-member board consisting of five professional members and four members of the public appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate.

The primary function of the board is to protect the citizens of Texas. The board accomplishes this mission by determining the qualifications and fitness of a license applicant and by adopting a code of ethics for licensure as "the granting of a license to practice a profession". The board grants a license to practice and then regulates that practice through a set of administrative rules. The marriage and family therapy rules are found at Title 22, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 801.

A professional association, on the other hand, is an advocate or voice of a given profession. Webster defines an association as "an organization of persons having a common interest", "a society of colleagues".

An association uses the strength of its participation to secure the character of the occupation. The Texas Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, Inc., (TAMFT), has just that as its mission statement, "the mission of TAMFT is to use the power of the TAMFT organization to protect

the integrity of the professional practice in the marketplace". This association, TAMFT, achieves this mission by providing leadership and professional developmental opportunities, by facilitating local and statewide networking and by being a voice in the Texas Legislature and governmental affairs, as well as many other activities.


To summarize, there is a distinct difference between a licensing board and a professional association. The licensing board licenses qualified individuals and regulate them in an administrative arena. The professional association advocates for a profession in the marketplace, as well as with elected government officials.

As a licensed marriage and family therapist in the State of Texas, it may serve you well to keep in mind the different functions performed by your licensing board and your professional association. If you find yourself in a quandary, ask yourself the question, "Am I being regulated or represented?"

Ethics Requirement

By Georgia Norman

By now, you have probably received information from the board about the rule change that became effective April 11, 2001. Effective this date, **3 hours of Ethics will be required every year.** We have received NUMEROUS calls regarding this change and understand the confusion.

 Just a reminder, keep all of your continuing education certificates, brochures, transcripts, etc in a safe place in case you are **audited**. If audited, you will need to provide the Board with documentation of the annual continuing education requirement. You should keep your continuing education files at least 2 years because the board office does not maintain your continuing education information.

Supervision Questions

We get a number of calls from Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists Associates who are unfamiliar with the requirements for supervision. Here's a brief synopsis of the requirements.

- ✓ Associates are required to complete 200 hours of supervision; 100 hours must be individual supervision.
- ✓ The 200 hours of supervision must be face-to-face.
- ✓ The Associate must receive a **minimum of 1 hour of supervision every 2 weeks.**
- ✓ Associates who fall under the 3000-hour requirement may use 100 hours of supervision earned during their graduate program. One half of the supervised hours after graduation must be individual supervision. **This does not apply to those under the 1000 hours requirement, as all of their hours (including supervision) must be post-graduate.**
- ✓ The board must approve supervisors. The supervisor requirements can be found in §801.143 of the rules.
- ✓ After January 1, 1995, no hours will be counted toward the post-degree supervised experience unless the board licensed the Associate.
- ✓ **Both the Supervisor and the Associate** may have disciplinary actions taken against their licenses for violation of the rules.
- ✓ An Associate may have no more than 2 board-approved supervisors at any time unless given prior approval by the board.

Supervisors, please share this information with your Associates. Please refer to §801.142 - §801.144 regarding licensure and supervisor requirements. If you have any other questions regarding supervision of Associates, please contact the board office.

Rules Changes & Amendments

The Board has proposed amendments to the rules and these changes that have been posted in the ***Texas Register*** in June 2002. The proposed amendments are:

- ❑ A Supervision hour is 45 minutes.
- ❑ Late fees will be based on renewal fee plus one-half of the current contracted examination fee;
- ❑ Continuing Education Sponsor fee will be 50.00 annually;
- ❑ Suspension of a License for failure to pay child support or non-compliance with child custody order;
- ❑ Those in default of a student loan must surrender their license until their loan payment has been resolved to the satisfaction of the National Student Loan Center.
- ❑ A reinstatement fee has been implemented for those who have surrendered their license because of child custody agreement or student loan default.

These amendments will become final in November 2002.

Examination Results Since May 2001

Total Test 169

Total Pass 137

Total Failures 32

***Texas State Board of Examiners of
Marriage and Family Therapists
Board Members***

**Marvarene Oliver, Ed.D.
Chairman**

**Waymon R. Hinson, Ph.D.
Vice-Chairman**

**Joe Ann Clack, M.B.E.
Public Member**

**Sandra L. DeSobe, M.A.
Professional Member**

**Reverend B.W. McClendon, D. Min.
Public Member**

**Antonio A. Morales
Public Member**

**Brenda VanAmburgh, Ph.D.
Professional Member**

**Bishop William H. Watson
Public Member**

**Jackie M. Weimer, M.S.
Professional Member**

TSBEMFT Staff

***Bobby D. Schmidt, MEd
Executive Director***

***Georgia Norman
Administrative Assistant***

***Barbara Delane
Administrative Assistant***

***Frequently Requested
Numbers & Addresses***

**Texas Association of Marriage & Family
Therapists
PO Box 140647
Austin, TX 78714-0647
512- 454- 8626**

**American Association of Marriage & Family
Therapists
1133 15th Street, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005
202- 452- 0109**

**Texas State Board of Professional Counselors
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756
512- 834- 6658**

**Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756
512- 719- 3521**

**Council on Sex Offender Treatment
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756
512- 834- 4530**

**Texas Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse
9001 North IH 35, Suite 105
Austin, Texas 78756
512- 349- 6600**

**Texas State Board of Medical Examiners
333 Guadalupe Street, Tower III, Suite 610
Austin, Texas 78701
512- 305- 7010**

**Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists
333 Guadalupe Street, Suite 2-450
Austin, Texas 78701
512- 305- 7700**

Internet/Email

Internet Address:

<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/hcqs/plc/mft.htm>

Information about TSBEMFT, law and rules, licensure applications, rosters of licensees and complaint packets are available on this website.

Email Address:

mft@licc.tdh.state.tx.us

If you need to contact us regarding questions about your license, you may also contact us by email.

Consumer Complaints Hotline

1-800-942-5540

Examination Dates

January 20, 2003 – February 16, 2003

May 19, 2003 – June 15, 2003

September 15, 2003 – October 12, 2003

Let us hear from YOU.....

The Communicator is published to provide licensees and applicants with current information about board operations. Please drop us a note listing any topics you would like to see addressed in the newsletter.

Please mail your comments to:

Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists
West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756-3183